

DDC's Safety Evaluation

By Jessica Walter-Groft, DDC Command Affairs

DDC recently contracted with EA, an environmental solutions firm, to perform safety assistance visits at DDC distribution centers. During EA's inspections of the depots, they identified hazards in areas such as fall protection, electrical, storage racks, dock operations, machine guarding, housekeeping, material storage and fire protection. From EA's report, DDC Safety Officials will be able to better target their efforts to improve workplace safety by eliminating these hazards.

EA identified electrical hazards as the most prominent safety issue at the depots. During their inspections, EA personnel found damaged electrical outlets, improper use of extension cords, open electrical boxes and improperly wired circuits.

Another common hazard at the depots was the obstruction of exits. The EA report provides pictures of exit doors that are either obstructed by storage racks and security gates or completely blocked by pallets of materiel.

An ongoing concern that continues to be identified by the EA audits is the failure to provide adequate fall protection. During the visits, EA personnel noticed that many removable guardrails had been removed from dock and loft areas. They also noticed damaged fall protection lanyards that were still being used by depot employees.

As a distribution center employee, you can make your workplace safer by simply identifying these hazards and notifying your supervisor so that the problem can be fixed. Things you should look for include damaged safety equipment, spills on the floor, damaged storage racks, blocked exits and fire extinguishers, removed machine or dock guards and lack of proper personal protective equipment (PPE).



Nestainers not securely positioned. Source: EA report.



Damaged, unstable storage rack. Source: EA Report.



Damaged fall protection lanyard. Source: EA Report.



Power saw with lower blade guard missing. Source: EA Report.

NIOSH to Conduct Ergonomics Study Using DDSP Employees

By Jessica Walter-Groft, DDC Command Affairs

Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, PA (DDSP), has volunteered to take part in an ergonomics study conducted by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to determine if ergonomic intervention reduces employees' exposure to the



Ergonomic tilting mechanism allows employees to easily access the material on the bottom of a container. Pictured: Michael Moharter of DDSP.

physical risk factors of neck, shoulder, hand and back injuries.

The study, which could begin at DDSP as early as Spring 2004, will identify specific jobs or tasks that are likely to benefit from ergonomic intervention in the form of work aids (devices) or behavior modification (proper bending, twisting, materiel handling, etc.). After studying these jobs, NIOSH personnel will suggest a series of ergonomic interventions to DDSP Command. It will be up to DDSP to decide which interventions to put in place. NIOSH will then return to the job site to repeat the study to see if the ergonomic interventions made a difference in reducing risk factors and increasing employee productivity.

"By participating in the NIOSH study, we are given free access to trained ergonomics specialists that will help us improve our safety and productivity operations-and at little to no cost to the taxpayer," said Renee Hartman, DDSP Safety Manager.

DDSP is the only federal facility that will be involved in the study that is expected to last nine to 12 months, and DDSP will be able to share the knowledge gained from the study to improve the safety programs at other distribution centers.